

Dear FCC,

The FCC has failed America in regards to public control of broadcast frequencies. Don't do the same thing in regards to Net Neutrality.

Instead of reflecting your mandated purpose to make sure the public airwaves are used for the public good, about half the broadcast day is filled with end-to-end infomercials and advertisements trying to sell a bunch of crap that nobody needs. How is that serving the public good?

Under Reagan the FCC got rid of the Fairness Doctrine and fought community-based radio and TV broadcasting. How is that serving the public good? How can we get to hear the other side of the stories that corporate interests don't want us to hear?

Later, under George W. Bush and Chairman Powell, the FCC removed all the reasonable limits on market saturation and information monopolies. Those limits once protected diversity in our culture, but now TV and radio stations are almost exclusively owned by a few corporate and wealthy interests. The justification was that new technologies like the Internet would provide a widely and freely available source of alternative views, so the public airwaves could be given over to private and greedy corporate interests without endangering our democracy.

These same corporate interests seek to destroy PBS public broadcasting--the last of the airwaves they don't own. How much longer will you hold out on that front?

All the while, the FCC continues to shut down "pirate" broadcasters who represent community and not corporate interests. Where else will we hear these voices of average Americans? On the Internet?

No, not if Net Neutrality is sacrificed as well. If you get rid of Net Neutrality, will you then reverse the rulings on market saturation and force the corporate interests to observe restrictive limits on media ownership? Will you reinstitute the Fairness Doctrine in order to preserve the diversity and democracy that was argued would be preserved on the Internet? Remember, Net Neutrality was the cornerstone of the "new technologies argument" that supposedly justified selling off the public airwaves. Now you're considering getting rid of the last open source of diversity and alternative information. Goodbye democracy.

It apparently has come down to this: You, the FCC, must protect our last chance to allow anyone other than the wealthy to be heard from at all. Please don't cave in once again to the demands of fabulously rich, greedy people who wish to privatize all public resources (which the FCC should be protecting because many are the foundation of democracy) and twist them to wring out every possible penny they can conceive of grabbing while at the same time trying to suppress any avenues of resistance to their will.

Under Clinton, it was a mistake for the government to turn over the infrastructure of the Internet to these same greedy people. The infrastructure should have remained ours. Because of that egregious error these greedy people are now in a position to have absolute control over the flow of information and debate, allowing their side to be heard and nothing else.

As you can see from the statements above, the track record of your predecessors over the last thirty years has displayed a blatant disregard for ordinary citizens and their well being. Please, for once, ignore the pleas of these corporate giants as well as the pleas from the "elected" officials whose offices and services have been bought by these same greedy entities. Keep in mind that all their arguments are designed to serve as well as mask their greed. They are playing you for fools.

The FCC's previous failures have lead to this desperate situation, and we are now standing on the battleground that will decide the last great hope of democracy and humanity. The Internet is now the last bastion of free speech left. You might as well kiss our democracy goodbye without Net Neutrality. China certainly nipped it in the bud.

Some members of Congress have fallen prey to phone and cable company lobbyists and are pressuring you to pull back from your rule-making plans that would institutionalize Net Neutrality. These lawmakers aren't representing the public interest, and they don't speak for me, my family, or my friends. Please stand firm in support of Net Neutrality. Millions of good Americans -- the folks whom Congress was elected to represent -- are with you, even if the bought ones are not.

Stand up for our democracy, our Constitution, our freedom and the fundamental American values that give us a right to speak our minds and -- despite the horrible decisions that the FCC and our government have made over the last thirty years -- stand up for the seminal right of all Americans to be heard. There is no freedom of speech without the right to communicate equally (which includes the right to have your message be received), and that is why a net-neutral Internet is essential to keep ours a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

God bless you and give you the strength needed in this battle to preserve our great nation.

Sincerely,

--Brian Ritter